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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
1899	3
December 1899	3
"The Spirit of Wine Versus the Spirit of God" The Medical Missionary 9, 12.	3
EXCESS IN WINE	3
WINE OPPOSED TO WISDOM	4
WHEREIN THE EVIL LIES	5
ONE EFFECT OF THE SPIRIT OF WINE	5
INTOXICATION FROM FOOD	6
A CAUSE OF LACK OF KNOWLEDGE	7
NEED OF TEMPERANCE REFORM	7
"JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST"	8

1899

December 1899

“The Spirit of Wine Versus the Spirit of God” The Medical Missionary 9, 12.

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In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians we read the following exhortation, which is upon the face of it timely: “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” *Verses 15-19. MEDM December 1899, page 4.1*

From these words it is very evident that there is no fellowship between the spirit of wine and the Spirit of God. They are directly opposed to each other. Both can not rule at the same time in the same body. When the spirit of wine holds sway, the Holy Spirit must be driven out; and if the Holy Spirit is given leave to control, then he will banish and keep away every trace of the deceiver from the body wherein he dwells. *MEDM December 1899, page 4.2*

EXCESS IN WINE

In wine there is excess, or riot, as the Revision has it. The Greek word means nothing less than “debauchery.” This brings us face to face with the question as to how much wine (of course it is fermented wine that is here spoken of) one may take without going to excess. That depends wholly upon how much wine a person must have before it can be called wine. The text does not say that there is excess in a barrel of wine, nor in a gallon, nor a quart, nor a pint, nor a single glass, nor a spoonful, nor even in a single drop. It is in *wine*, in the thing itself, regardless of quantity, that the excess

lies. So it is evident that if one has but a single drop of wine, or any other liquor in which the same spirit is present, he has too much. Excess, riot, debauchery, lie in every drop.*MEDM December 1899, page 4.3*

The least portion of alcoholic liquor, therefore, is a foe to the Holy Spirit, and wars against his presence. There is no excess in the Spirit of God. One can never have too much. We are exhorted to “be filled with the Spirit,” to be filled even to overflowing. *John 7:38, 39*. When a vessel is filled with any liquid, there is no room for anything else; therefore when one is filled with the Spirit, there will be in the entire body nothing but the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit will be the life of the body; and every thought and motion will be the result of the working of the Spirit. This is not merely the privilege, but the duty, of every Christian. The command to “be filled with the Spirit” is as imperative as is the commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”*MEDM December 1899, page 4.4*

WINE OPPOSED TO WISDOM

Notice that the exhortation to abstain from wine is coupled with the exhortation not to be unwise, but to understand what the will of the Lord is. The Holy Spirit is given to us to make known the things of God (*1 Corinthians 2:12*); God’s Spirit is “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding” (*Isaiah 11:2*); but the spirit of wine-alcohol-takes away the understanding. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” *Proverbs 20:1*. This lack of understanding can not justly be charged to the Lord by saying that he has not given us intellects capable of comprehending his will, but is due solely to the spirit which works against the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. God gives his Spirit freely to every one who is willing to receive, and who asks (*Luke 11:13*); and it is the Spirit that gives understanding, that makes the simple wise.*MEDM December 1899, page 4.5*

“But,” most of the readers of this article will say, “this does not concern me, for I am a teetotaler; wine drinking is certainly not the cause of any lack of understanding of the will of God, so far as I am concerned.”*MEDM December 1899, page 4.6*

Let us see; the case is not yet finished. There is another exhortation which is really a part of the one that we have already quoted. It reads thus: "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh; for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." *Proverbs 23:20, 21.MEDM December 1899, page 4.7*

WHEREIN THE EVIL LIES

Before we give this text further attention, let us consider what the evil of wine drinking is. Wherein does it consist? Is it in the act of lifting a glass to our lips, or in the act of swallowing?-Manifestly in neither, for we can lift a glass to our lips, and we may swallow the liquid contents of a glass without committing any sin. The difference lies wholly in the nature of that which we swallow. If wine had no ill effects up man, there would be no sin in drinking it. We go through the same motions in drinking water that we do in drinking wine; but wine deceives, while water does not. It is the effect which alcoholic liquor has upon the body and soul that makes the taking of it a sin.*MEDM December 1899, page 4.8*

Suppose that instead of drinking alcohol, we manufacture it in our bodies; are we then clear?-Manifestly not. Every one knows that the vender and manufacturer of liquor have a large share of responsibility for the existing drunkenness and crime. The sins of many drunkards lie at the door of the brewer and the distiller more than at the door of the weak ones who drank the stuff prepared for them. What excuse, then, can be offered for those who not only manufacture alcohol, but who consume all that they make? Since the sin of drunkenness consists not in the mere act of swallowing the liquor, but in the effect of its poison on the individual, blunting his perceptive faculties and unfitting him for the service which God justly requires of him, it is evident that whoever manufactures alcoholic poison in his own body is in great need of the exhortation quoted at the beginning of this article. The same is true of whoever manufactures any other poisons.*MEDM December 1899, page 5.1*

ONE EFFECT OF THE SPIRIT OF WINE

The last text quoted says that “the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” This is preceded by the charge not to be among winebibbers and riotous eaters of flesh. It is a fact that the effects of meat eating are in many respects the same as those of liquor drinking, although not so marked. At this point we will call attention to but one,-drowsiness. After the first excitement produced by liquor has passed away, a feeling of drowsiness takes its place. The brain becomes dull, the mind less active, the eyes become fixed and glassy, and after ineffectual efforts to keep awake, the victim sinks into a heavy sleep, from which he awakes unrefreshed. Drunkenness is so common that few can have failed to see this process many times.*MEDM December 1899, page 5.2*

INTOXICATION FROM FOOD

Did you ever, my “temperance” friend, stop to think that this is precisely what takes place after a heavy meal of your favorite beef or turkey or chicken? Of course you did not notice it so much if you had hard work in the open air; neither does the drinker feel the effects of his potations so much if he can keep exercising in fresh air. It was when you sat down, a you felt quite incline to after your meal, that you dozed off.*MEDM December 1899, page 5.3*

Sometimes the effects are much more marked. You have doubtless witnessed cases where the drinker’s stomach was protesting against the poison of alcohol and was relieving itself of some of the load; and as you have turned aside, you have wondered how a man can make such a filthy brute of himself. But did you never have the same experience?—“No; I have never drunk liquor.” But you have frequently had “bilious spells,” have you not? Did you think that you ought to be blamed because of them? Did you not rather regard yourself as a poor sufferer to be pitied? And so you were; yet you were in exactly the same condition as the drunkard. You were both suffering from what you had put into your mouth and swallowed. The drunkard swallowed poison; you may not have swallowed poison, but you at least took that which made poison after you swallowed it. Wherein were you better than he? Do you not see that the injunction to be filled with the Spirit instead of being drunk with wine has a very wide application?*MEDM December 1899, page 5.4*

A CAUSE OF LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Perhaps you have left off the use of meat, and have considered yourself a health reformer. Nevertheless, you have not escaped that drowsiness which characterizes the drunkard. Have you never excused yourself for your lack of knowledge of the Bible by saying that you could not study because as soon as you sat down with a book in your hand you went to sleep? Especially was this the case on Sabbath afternoon, when you ought to have been the most awake. When you went to church you either fell asleep or else had to make such desperate efforts to keep awake that you could not hear anything that was said. You were the exact picture of a drunken man trying to appear sober. And that is just what you were. Perhaps it is better to say “we,” for we have all passed through this experience.*MEDM December 1899, page 5.5*

Whence came this heaviness? We thought that it was constitutional, or that it was because we had to labor hard out of doors; but that was not the cause. We were intoxicated. We had perhaps eaten soft porridge, which could not possibly be digested; possibly we had added sugar to it, thus increasing its indigestibility; the mass had fermented, forming alcohol and other poisons, and we were suffering the effects. We were drunken with alcohol manufactured on the premises, and that kept us from hearing and understanding the will of the Lord, and from being filled with the Spirit. Is this not a terrible thought?*MEDM December 1899, page 5.6*

NEED OF TEMPERANCE REFORM

I have mentioned only one of the many ways in which we may become self-intoxicated. Space will not permit more at present, but a careful study of what has been written on this subject and all that may yet appear, will teach us how to keep sober, so that the Spirit of God may have an opportunity to work. Our sin has been one of ignorance, but people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. God is, however, graciously giving us opportunity to learn. We are exhorted to receive the Holy Ghost, and to pray for the Spirit; but how can we expect our prayers for the Spirit to be answered while we persistently fill ourselves with the opposing spirit?*MEDM December*

1899, page 6.1

Possibly you may have thought that too much has been said about health reform. Very well, let the expression “health reform” drop, if you will, and devote your attention to temperance. That, at least, accompanies the reception of the Spirit.*MEDM December 1899, page 6.2*

God expects all his people to have clear heads and minds, so that they can comprehend his will. They are to be “of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.” *Isaiah 11:3*. If they live an outdoor life, so much the more should they be able to comprehend the will of the Lord; for the Lord designed that all men should live in the open air and labor hard in tilling the soil; yet he expects all to know his will. This drowsiness that has hindered our studying the Word of God is due solely to intoxication through eating. The “spirit of slumber” has come upon us, because our table has been a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block. *Romans 11:8, 9*. Let us study diligently to find the cause, and remove it. “Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” *1 Thessalonians 5:6*. “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep.” *Romans 13:11*.*MEDM December 1899, page 6.3*

“JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST”

What will be the result of learning to eat so that instead of becoming drunken with the spirit of wine we may eat to the glory of God, discerning the Lord’s body, and receiving by faith his perfect life? God has given us “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (*Isaiah 60:3*); and though we may never have studied music, and our voices may never be heard in the congregation, we shall involuntarily be “speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*MEDM December 1899, page 6.4*

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